



PEPSI INITIATIVE OFFERS NEW ROUTE FOR TRAINING, JOBS

Disabilities experts are joining forces with PepsiCo in a new hiring initiative in Burnsville, one of two company sites in the nation to launch Pepsi ACT, Achieving Change Together.

The company is seeking to ease the process for jobseekers with disabilities to obtain employment with the PepsiCo. One means used is a unique training program that couples classroom soft skills training with hands-on, job-based skills training. At ProAct in Eagan, trainings are being conducted as hiring efforts ramp up in preparation for Pepsi's "100 Days of Summer," the time when product demand rises and drives the need for more employees.

The program focuses on the two entry-level positions where most of the company's frontline employees start their careers; loader and merchandiser. Connecticut-based Ability Beyond, a national consulting firm that works with companies of all sizes to increase hiring of individuals with disabilities, is partnering with Pepsi ACT, nationally and collaborates with ProAct for the Burnsville site. In



Above, ProAct consumers simulated warehouse and store display scenarios where the open positions would be active. At left, Director Richard Luby, with Connecticut-based Ability Beyond, shares his interviewing expertise with a group of potential candidates. He coordinates the Pepsi ACT program in Minnesota, working with PepsiCo in Burnsville.

Minnesota, the effort is driven primarily by Ability Beyond's Director of Partnership Development, Richard Luby, who engages groups of 10 to 15 ProAct clients in training that encourages them to strive for success.

What PepsiCo is looking for, Luby said, are qualified job candidates who are

willing to work hard and put their all into a job that for many has opened up opportunities for long and successful careers.

"You never know the opportunities that are out there, you never know your abilities until you try it," he said. "You don't know."

In a session on interviewing skills, Luby told the group that the two-week training does not guarantee them a job, but that the preparation can open doors to other opportunities, too. "It's not for me to assess you, not for ProAct to assess you— it's for you to assess you," said Luby, who probed the trainees for examples and ideas. Group members learned more about how to better sell themselves in an interview by giving interesting and valid answers based on their own life experiences.

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CLEANING UP FOR RED WING SHOES



Chance McFarland arrives at the Red Wing plant in the late afternoon, just in time to clean the facility between shifts.

Sometimes timing is everything, and Chance McFarland was a "shoe-in" when a large Red Wing manufacturer had a need. His new employer carries the town's name around the world.

Janitorial service for Red Wing Shoes' hometown plant is McFarland's responsibility late in the day. Arriving mid-afternoon, during a gap between shifts, gives him the chance to get a jump on cleanup for the 450 workers who just punched out. About 250 more will be on hand when he wraps up his part-time day.

McFarland vacuums mats, cleans the plant's eight bathrooms and keeps the water areas stocked. His new duties have been rewarding, bringing a threefold increase in pay over his previous jobs.

The new position came about after the plant eliminated a full-time janitorial job and gave some of the cleaning duties to a material handler. That worker then got too busy with production to cover the cleaning, explains McFarland's supervisor, Keith Johnson.

The focus here is on churning out thousands of pairs of boots, explains Johnson. The "retro" 1950s and 60s work boot styles are very popular overseas as fashion footwear. "They want an American made product."

For McFarland, the mid-afternoon start times are ideal. "I'm wide awake," he said. Quiet and focused, McFarland said he would be happy working here the rest of his life.



IMPACT ON THE FAMILY

"ProAct has no idea how deep they go into the family and touch the individual," said Gary Lien, the father of Amanda Lien, an 11-year participant with ProAct. "If I won the lottery, I would share it with them. They do not know how good they are."

Lien, who is in daily contact with Amanda, is the "go to" guy in the family as he learns of Amanda's accomplishments and current needs. He credits ProAct's Eagan staff for her progress as they set goals and shape behavior. "They are always calm," he said. "They have taught her a lot of things and then they reinforce it until the goal is reached ... even when it could take years."

He appreciates the smiling, friendly



Gary Lien

faces and greetings as Amanda walks down ProAct's hallways "where everyone is respected for who they are."

Amid the bustling and busy atmosphere, he said he feels that the staff is well informed of the behaviors that need attention.

With so many friends, her family reports that Amanda loves coming to work to see everyone, but she has a new appreciation for work success. Since getting a new job position, she has seen a fourfold increase in her paycheck. Her sister Melinda, a job supervisor at ProAct, credits her improved discipline and ability to concentrate. Amanda now has an interest in working in the community, as her friends do, but Melinda reminds her that it is up to



Consumer Amanda Lien, second from right, and her family have a close connection with ProAct, and take note of her enthusiasm for the program.

her staff to decide if she would get to work in the community and reminds her to keep improving.

Also on staff at ProAct is Amanda's other sister, Sheena Henry, who works in administration and sees her throughout the day.

Amanda's brother Garrett is her overnight personal care attendant at her apartment and drives her to ProAct each morning. "Her social skills have definitely improved since coming to ProAct," he said. She graduated from the Transition

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Inside: • Records are back? • Photo artist starts business • Food shelf volunteers • Golf Aug. 18

EAGAN WALGREENS USES 'REDI' TRAINING, FINDS CANDIDATES

Most who encounter Parker Stubbe at Walgreens would not know how new he is to the job.

As he steadily stocks and straightens shelves, he knows he'll soon move to the register to finish out his evening shift.

An associate with the store on Cliff Road in Eagan for two weeks, Stubbe is one of the first hires for Walgreens REDI, Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative.

The program offers four weeks of unpaid training, a certificate of completion and, for some, a job in retail. How does Stubbe, 20, like his first "real job?" He says it pays better than fake ones.

ProAct vocational specialist Derik



Parker Stubbe was a natural for stocking and customer service at the Walgreens on Cliff Road in Eagan.

Anderson supervised and trained him for a month, on the last four days of each week. Learning the registers and helping customers, Anderson and Stubbe were schooled in most every aspect of retail services.

The hands on portion was supplemented by soft skills preparation on the first day of the week. Customer service and professionalism were covered.

REDI has helped the major drugstore



to find people who care about their work, explains Manager Kristi Walker. In exchange for free training from store employees, participants take on a portion of the labor. Both parties see the benefit.

"Everybody loves him here. It's easy for us," said Walker. Stubbe is especially good at checking product dates, 30 days and 90 days out, she said. ProAct leaders were hopeful that future training sessions would occur. "Everybody there was friendly," said Anderson. "They were able to work well with the clients, teach them patience and were willing to help them to learn."

Feeding majestic creatures



Eagan's Sophie Newman has a volunteer experience at an Inver Grove Heights farm for several hours twice a month. Watch for the story in June.

From the President...

ProAct's core mission involves providing employment related services for individuals with disabilities or other challenges and that is what makes me so pleased about two developments: the selection of ProAct for a special Pepsi pilot program and inclusion in an innovative Walgreens program.

ProAct is one of just two sites chosen for the Pepsi ACT, Achieving Change Together training program which will provide employment opportunities at the Pepsi

Beverages facility in Burnsville. This is dramatic and offers great potential for our clients. ProAct joins another firm, Ability Beyond, of Connecticut, in working with Pepsi on the program.

The opportunity with Walgreens is also very meaningful, part of an overall program to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in the company's workforce. Already a national example for its work with people with disabilities at its major distribution facilities, Walgreens is now focusing on its retail



stores. ProAct has several people who have become among the first participants in the Walgreens REDI program, Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative. Participants receive four weeks of in-depth training, from stocking to the cash register, and some will be hired to be regular employees.

My greatest satisfaction from these developments is that ProAct was selected due to its reputation for quality employment services and ability to collaborate with others effectively.

Having survived our frigid winter, we look forward to adding more outdoor activities, including both work and non-work opportunities. All serve to promote inclusion in the community.

The warmer weather also reminds me to ask you to put August 18 on your calendar, the date of the ProAct Golf Classic, ProAct's only fundraising event, and always a good time.

Thank you for your continuing support.

ATTRACTIVE HOTEL FINDS NEEDED HELP

The Nichols Inn & Suites tried something new when it hired several people with disabilities to clean rooms at its hotel in the pottery area of Red Wing.

"I wouldn't hesitate to suggest doing it again in a heartbeat," said Assistant Manager Pam Steffenhagen. She works with two people from ProAct to clean and maintain rental rooms. Steffenhagen collaborates with Nancy Fick, who she said is reliable and does a good job. "We're really glad to have her. As part of the staff, she's so upbeat and gets along with everybody."

Fick takes responsibility for a portion of the hotel's 42 rooms, which cater mostly to business clients. She came last August with help from ProAct job developer Kyle Adams and the Red Wing WorkForce center. Fick had worked for the area casino for nearly 10 years and was a nurses aide and janitor.

Workers from ProAct have done well with the training at Nichols, said



Pam Steffenhagen, left, and Nancy Fick are two friendly faces that make the stay pleasurable at the Nichols Inn & Suites, where several people found jobs through ProAct.

Manager Teresa Frazier. "If they don't know, they ask." They're also open to picking up more hours when needed. And, Fick has had the opportunity to train in others.

Steffenhagen said she wasn't aware of the support provided by ProAct until the new people came on board. "It's a great organization. I support it 100 percent. Everybody has different objectives. It's just wonderful."



NEIGHBORS, INC. WELCOMES VOLUNTEERS

A community resource in South St. Paul relied mostly on volunteers to help 5,000 families in 2013. A total of 673,890 pounds of food was distributed, and individuals from ProAct in Eagan assisted in the process.

Neighbors, Inc. serves several communities in Northern Dakota County, calling on a small army of more than 1,400 volunteers. People from ProAct gain work skills in the process.

"We treat it like it's a community job," said Site Supervisor Angela Fluery, who brought a group of three to the site overlooking the Mississippi River, just south of Pigs Eye Lake. Individuals learn about showing up on time, when to take breaks and other work skills.



Tea bags and sweetener are packaged by Katie Zettell, left and Heather Bernard at the South St. Paul foodshelf. Below, Supervisor Angela Fluery, left, with Scott Davis and Bernard.



Volunteer Coordinator Linda Messerich said ProAct's volunteers are very productive. This keeps her busy finding more work for them to do.

"They like the variety, and helping people," said Day Training and Habilitation

Coordinator Jennifer Markley. Some of the crew also assisted with a yardwork project last fall.

The volunteer concept isn't restricted to one area, either. In addition, ProAct is a regular presence at a Burnsville food shelf and a thrift store.

Impact on Family, from page 1

Plus program at age 22 and found that having her own apartment with support from personal care attendants, instead of living in a group home, was more predictable. For the same reason, the family decided that getting a ride to ProAct was less disruptive than riding on the ProAct bus. These changes brought more consistency to each day.

Weekends usually include a family event as well as vacations and time at the family cabin. "We are a close family," said



ProAct President and CEO Steve Ditschler with Amanda Lien.

Kris Lien, Amanda's mother. "Our kids are very close; all involved in part of her care." They were very protective when she was growing up and had friends who were very nice to her, she said.

"It is a great place," said Kris Lien. "She has blossomed (since coming to ProAct) ... continuing to work hard ... loves the staff and looks forward to working every day." When the

family goes to the cabin, Amanda cannot wait to go back to ProAct, her mother said.

Pepsi ACT, from page 1

Technical skills and training are required for many of PepsiCo's positions, said ProAct Vocational Coordinator Heather Deuschlaender. Learning the work routine starts at ProAct's West building in Eagan, where Pepsi beverage products and equipment were on hand in a simulated back room and warehouse setup.

During the job based skills portion of the training, candidates worked on basic introductions and entering and stocking typical store shelf displays, including the aisle end cap arrangements. Wearing wireless headsets, trainees took orders for specific products and transferred them by hand and with pallet jacks.

PepsiCo and Ability Beyond work together to provide the necessary training to job seekers and even

candidates who do not receive positions with the company learn valuable skills to include on their resume. Training

individuals for these jobs is only part of the preparation PepsiCo and Ability Beyond are doing to ensure success for jobseekers hired by the company. These preparations include job and process assessments along with disability training, Luby explains. "There are a lot of stereotypes

about people with disabilities, so we get the pulse of the local environment," he said. Ability Beyond works closely with local



ProAct consumers acted out Pepsi work scenarios as part of a two week training and the chance to get a job during the busy summer season.

management as well as corporate leaders to ensure activities are meeting the needs of the business and of the potential applicant.

"You need to talk to frontline employees, management, get their buy-in, and it trickles down," Luby explains. He helps PepsiCo build relationships with ProAct and similar organizations.

While the initial focus is on two distribution centers, the other being in Houston, Texas, Luby said the intention is for Pepsi ACT to grow and become a "full

scale movement." Jobseekers who may not need the two-week training can also apply for positions at the bottler. Ability Beyond and ProAct serve as advocates for these individuals. The two-week training is for people who may be qualified, but need more motivation, and soft, hard and safety skills training. "More importantly, we give them the hard skills right off the bat," said Luby.

While people's disabilities may or may not have hindered their progress in the past, Luby is working to set them on a path to the future. "Each one of these individuals can do it," said Luby. "They have to not only believe, but motivate themselves to do it." As the director of the program articulately shares his knowledge and enthusiasm, his listeners also note that he himself has a disability. Luby said it's very noticeable, and that it may help people better relate with him.

CLASSIC AUDIO, ART, PACKAGED HERE

As ProAct workers in Eagan package traditional records by the thousands, some younger people ask, "Why is that CD so big?"

What they're seeing is a French-made niche product that's popular with "hipsters," explains Andrew Volna, president of Noiseland in Minneapolis. Full-size vinyl records dazzle the eyes with artistic covers from artists including Bruce Springsteen, Cyndi Lauper, Miles Davis, Johnny Cash and others.

The work is detailed, and requires a fast turnaround. Gate fold album jackets are fitted with inserts and records within sleeves before they're shrinkwrapped, said Greg Pechman, sales manager with ProAct. Some 42,000 were needed by mid-March, and the jobs can employ up to 30 people at once.

What's also unusual is that many of Noiseland's customers don't even play the records, said Volna.

Instead, they use them to gain a more tangible connection with a particular band. There's a tactile experience and a sort of romance with vinyl, much like a coffee table book. "It's a different experience than streaming music online."

Deadline pressures are driven by upcoming artist tours, release dates and broader marketing campaigns in magazines and other media, he said.

"In a lot of ways, what ProAct is doing are services of the last mile for what started years earlier for the project," Volna said. The final packaging is the last step before delivery to a distribution center in Franklin, Indiana.

The business owner said



Full-size LP records undergo final assembly before they're shipped to Indiana, and later purchased by "hipster" types who appreciate the artistic jackets.

Pechman "gets it," has a good attitude and is enjoyable to work with. ProAct's clients and staff provide the attention to detail that the projects demand. The work is expected to be ongoing and Pechman is enthusiastic about future album releases.

Stay in touch with us

Admission Information

Eagan, Hudson-
Sue Lowe 651-289-3151
Red Wing, Zumbrota-
Pamela Veith 651-327-5613

Need Employees?

Eagan- Catherine McCoy
651-289-3170 (groups)
Eagan-
Heather Deuschlaender
651-289-3163 (individuals)

Hudson- Kyle Adams 651-327-5622
Red Wing- Kyle Adams
651-327-5622

Production Services

Eagan- Dave Cavalier
651-289-3158
Greg Pechman 651-289-3157
Red Wing- Jim Bohmbach
651-327-5615

Donation Opportunities

Sheena Henry 651-289-3149

ProAct Board of Directors:

Chuck DeNet, Paul Kramp, Mary Ellen Leary, Larry Lehman, Jim Louwagie, Teri McCloughan, Dr. Barbara Rebhuhn, Marty Stapleton, DeDe Wanzek and Jon Wilbrecht.

PROACT BRIEFS: Eagan Foundation helps ProAct's transportation



Eagan Foundation Community Grants Chair Jon Hohenstein congratulates Sheena Henry, center, and Cathy McCoy from ProAct.

A hyper-local community group has chosen ProAct as one of 10 local nonprofits that makes Eagan "the best place to live, learn, work and play."

The Eagan foundation awarded \$1,500 toward the purchase of a ProAct bus as part of \$8,600 given to local organizations. The funds will be used toward a match for Minnesota Department of Transportation grant monies designated for bus purchases.

New recycling program pulls in 8.5 tons of lights

ProAct collected 18 large pallet boxes of Christmas lights in Eagan and three in Red Wing for its "Recycle Your Holidays" program.

Before processing, each pallet box weighs about 800 pounds, said program coordinator Jennifer Cavalier. She estimates about 16,800 pounds of material was collected in ProAct's first season with the program through the Recycling Association of Minnesota. Consumers are working to remove the light bulbs from all of the strands.



In other recycling news, ProAct hopes to expand the "Message in a Bottle" convenience store collection of bottles and cans. It currently services 31 stores.

Writers' group offers creative outlet



A newly created writers group at the Red Wing location began with a push from consumer Laurel Seither.

"For me, writing is a powerful art form," she said. The group of 17 or 18 produces a quarterly newsletter, "The Write Stuff."

Retired teacher Dave Glover meets regularly with the writer's group and has helped to create its leadership structure and plans. Case Manager Heidi Befort is also available to assist.

Writers focus on activities at ProAct and interview job coaches. Creative writing is another emphasis, and news outside of ProAct such as Special Olympics events.

The group has helped some consumers overcome shyness, said Seither. Her most exciting stories have covered items in ProAct's history. "We like the chance to cover stuff that goes on around ProAct and to share with the rest of our colleagues what we can do."

ProAct attends United Way of Hastings 50th Gala

The United Way of Hastings welcomed ProAct Production Manager Jennifer Cavalier to its 50th Anniversary Gala celebration in February.

Cavalier thanked the agency for supporting ProAct's programs and shared information about the nonprofit with event attendees. "The evening was very nice and ProAct was mentioned a couple of times," she said. Cavalier may also make her second community television appearance after being interviewed by Channel 14. She said the story may eventually appear on the United Way of Hastings website.

COOKING CLASSES OFFER MORE THAN FOOD

ProAct cooking classes have waiting lists. Titles such as "Casseroles for the Soul," or "Healthy Eats!" or "International Cooking" may make readers hungry, but it's not just the eating that makes them popular.

The kitchen is full of activity. Everyone is welcomed and involved. If time allows, food and cooking worksheets are shared and everyone settles in around the large table. Assignments for cutting, chopping or stirring are given. Some are asked to wash dishes, set the table or serve the meal. Eagan's cooking instructor, Dave Wentzlaff, is serious about inclusion.



Meal prep also starts discussions about planning, shopping lists, nutrition, kitchen safety and budgeting.



In Red Wing, Matt Grimley's class shops for the meal, checks nutrition labels and costs. Two recent popular lunches included

vegetable chili soup and veggie pizza. Eagan staffer Christine Peterson talks about the added nutritional value of walnuts, raspberries and melon balls in the chicken salad and reminds the class of the colorful food group posters they're studying.

The three-hour classes offer a rich learning environment and sound practical advice. Food and food handling discussions are constant, and some adaptive equipment increases safety. Most class members

require supervision and a few with cooking experience are a big help.

"What kind of meat is in this casserole?" asks Wentzlaff. "Pork?" Yes. "Do you know that at one time people got sick from eating undercooked pork?" The discussion turns briefly to cultural differences and the importance of cooking pork thoroughly. He then asks more questions, about subjects including colander, spice locations, preheating the oven, and zucchini. People begin to talk more, enjoy a sensory experience and get to know the

community better through cooking.

When the food is ready, table manners are not forgotten. No one begins eating until everyone is served and all are expected to ask to be excused before leaving the table. "Please" and "Thank you" are heard and there are many friendly discussions about personal accomplishments.

Then visitors show up and are curious



about the final dish. Popular creations are long remembered, such as pork roast with cranberries, skewer sandwiches and carrot cake. Using produce from the garden led to dishes that are healthy, such as twice baked squash or a smoothie with less sugar, but are not as appealing as the richer and sweeter dishes they usually eat.

By the end of the meal, a participant's suggested recipe for next week, spaghetti and meatballs, is discussed.

HER EXPERIENCE PROVEN INVALUABLE

Music therapy led 20-year Case Manager Gloria Bechel to a career at ProAct in Red Wing, where her role in Day Training and Habilitation goes back almost as far as the program.

"I knew if I was going to do that (music), I needed to become comfortable working with people with disabilities," said Bechel. Her early 90s plan was to leave in two years. Thankfully, for ProAct, she stayed.

The South Dakota native graduated from Moorhead State University and did an internship at Dakota House in Aberdeen, a residence and school for children with emotional and behavioral issues. Since that time, Bechel has become an expert in crisis intervention training, serving as an instructor for more than 16 years.

All behavior has a purpose, she says. And, ProAct's job is to help people make better choices and have better control over

their lives in an appropriate way. Power struggles can ensue, and sometimes staff members don't recognize what's going on.



South Dakota native Gloria Bechel has been a bedrock fixture with ProAct's Day Training and Habilitation program for 20 years.

Actually knowing the people being served, understanding what makes them tick and relating are crucial, said Bechel. Sometimes it's better to intervene and other times, people can be left to receive the consequences for their actions. Someone who refuses to work on a job, for example, may not be first in line for work the next day.

"I rely on Gloria's expertise with our day training program," said Sally Ogren, director of programs and services. "She is extremely conscientious about following the rules, but always finds a way to translate that into good services."

The reality with this and most any job is that sometimes in life, people have to do things they don't want to do, Bechel explains.

Part of understanding people with disabilities is to realize that the individuals are real people. "They want to be cared for, loved and want to feel a purpose in life ... and they want to contribute."

It is the green grass you have been looking for ProAct Golf Classic



August 18
(plenty of time to get in shape)

BUDDING BUTTERFLY PHOTOGRAPHER STARTS CARD BUSINESS WITH HELP FROM AREA PRINTER

A successful startup business requires passion, organization and good partnerships. David Severson, with help from Charlotte Eastin at ProAct, has all three.

Starting with his lifelong fascination with butterflies and years of photographs, some of them award winners, Severson is now selling note cards bearing his favorites.

His family and case manager are in agreement on this new endeavor. Michele Hein at Tandem Printing in Eagan was chosen to produce the cards. After examining all the options for printing the images, cards were the easiest to transport, a good fit for David's budget and were best to show off



his exceptional photography. David paid for printing and clear cellophane wrappers. After assembling all 240, he arranged them for display in a handsome, locked attaché case. The price is \$2.50 each, and the proceeds will go to printing more cards.

Of the thousands of photos to choose from, David found 12 of his favorites and easily speaks of the details of each species, its characteristics and how the photo was captured.

"When I was six, in kindergarten, I had a puzzle with a butterfly on it and I was fascinated by it," said Severson. That led to raising them as pets, from caterpillars to cocoon, to hatching the butterfly.

From his reading and photography

experience, Severson has a wealth of knowledge about these attractive insects.

Many in the card collection were taken at the Butterfly House in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., an enclosed area where visitors enter



Photographic artist David Severson with Michele Hein at Tandem Printing in Eagan, which was selected to produce his vibrant butterfly cards.

and are surrounded by varieties of butterflies from all over the world. One favorite photo provides a bonus, with a surprise second butterfly that David says, "snuck into the picture," and is in perfect focus.



Business discussions include the sales presentation, appropriate dress and grooming, and where to sell the cards. In April, David will be at the St. Paul Art Crawl and the Tandem Printing Open House, where he hopes to find customers who want to capture a butterfly of their own.

Those interested in purchasing the cards can contact Eastin at ceastin@proactinc.org or 651-686-0405.

BRUTAL WINTER DOESN'T DETER OUTSIDE WORK ON DAIRY FARM

Winter was brutal, and the bulk of the calves at a large dairy farm survived it. So did their caretaker, Jon Prescher.

"It was cold and snowy, and he was here every day and has a pretty good attitude about it. And, that means a lot," said manager Grant Sjoquist.

"It don't bother me," said Prescher, who was hired by White Rock Dairy in early December. After minimal job coaching from ProAct in Red Wing, he's done quite well with his 5:30 a.m. position as a calf feeder. Except for a year at ProAct, he has always worked outside.

It's a busy livestock outpost, with hundreds of cows and more than a hundred calves to feed and check on. Some can suck down their meal in as little as 30 seconds.

"The calves are like your pets," said Sjoquist. "It's like you're raising your kids out here. You worry about them."

The youngest creatures are bottle fed colostrum. Some are in individual huts near a milking area while the other calves are in a larger enclosed area nearby. The bottles are used for five days, then the large



Clockwise from top left, Grant Sjoquist, left, a manager at White Rock Dairy, relies on Jon Prescher to feed about 100 calves each morning. Prescher gives colostrum to the new calves and documents their condition. Older calves can eat grain and drink from buckets. Prescher provides water from a powered barrel.

babies are trained to drink from buckets, said job developer Kyle Adams. Like milk for humans, their milk is pasteurized to kill off bacteria. The older calves also receive grain.

From birth until week eight, Prescher is there for morning duty and mornings and evenings every other weekend. He makes sure the animals have clean beds of straw, moves them around, tags them with numbers, gives immunizations and fills out documents. Prescher checks for signs of pneumonia,



running nose, cough and droopy ears. This, with feeding and cleanup, takes about three hours, and it goes quick.

Though the manager ran an advertisement in the local newspaper, finding the right person is a different story in this country area south of Cannon Falls. "To be honest, it's really hard to find people to work on the farm," Sjoquist said.

Prescher has 15 years experience

working with livestock in Zumbrota, and wanted to try the job out. He's never late, and the only day he missed was during a blizzard. The boss told him to stay home.

That same boss has been duly impressed by Prescher's memory. He tracks what needs to be done. With 740 milk cows, and about three new calves born each day, neither man has a workload that's lacking.

"I get up there when he wants me up there for some help. To me that's all I can ask," Sjoquist said. The idea is to have workers focus on a main job, so they become really good at it. The farm has never worked with a group like ProAct and people with disabilities, the manager said, but this has worked well.

He uses a hands-off approach with employees, letting them find a sequence that works for them. He prefers working alone, and tries to extend that courtesy to others. For those who like to talk, there are plenty of animals available for one-way conversation. Prescher's favorite part is seeing the babies grow. The bull calves are there for a short time, while the females are up for an extended stay. By seven weeks, they can weigh 200 pounds.



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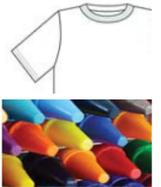
Programs funded in part by The Greater Twin Cities United Way, United Way of Goodhue, Wabasha & Pierce Counties and United Way of Hastings.



ProAct, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization with more than 40 years of experience.

Crafts reuse well worn items:

Used crayons, T-shirts and jeans are needed for ProAct craft classes to give these products a second life. Please bring them to the Eagan or Red Wing front desk during business hours. See website for more details: www.proactinc.org



Comments welcome, alternative formats available— Upon request, this publication is available in alternate languages and formats. Comments are welcome. Contact Sheena Henry at 651-289-3149.



Inclusion

you are part of the group, not a bystander



WISCONSIN PRO KNOWS SERVICE, INDUSTRY

Board member DeDe Wanzek has the privilege of working with children with disabilities as a pediatric physical therapist in western Wisconsin. She serves a few ProAct clients, and some children who may be participants in the future.

Wanzek has a keen understanding of where people are coming from and the services that are available for children. "We work hard to help children with disabilities become the best they can be," she said.

The experience proves beneficial to ProAct's board, a group she has served with for more than two years. Wanzek has been impressed with the service ProAct provides despite the challenges in the industry. Maintaining a mission focus and staying on top of the system changes takes a dedicated group of people and a good leader, she said. "It would be so easy to get bogged down in the logistics."

Human services has a business side, and that's also quite familiar. Wanzek had

started and managed St. Croix Therapy in Hudson, which was previously known as Avanti Center.

Knowing the business side of operations has given her an understanding of the financial obligations and challenges such organizations face. Much of it depends on the strengths and weaknesses of employees and the ability to keep a team heading on the right path, she explained.

Another aspect that Wanzek brings to bear for ProAct is an extensive travel record and exposure to different health care delivery systems across the U.S. and the world. "This helps to broaden my opinion and views of how health care is delivered and funded."

She said she has always enjoyed children, and that became clear early in her career. After having a son of her own with disabilities, her interest in serving children was reconfirmed. Wanzek wants to assure that as children with disabilities move into adulthood, helpful programs will remain available.



Board member DeDe Wanzek has offered her experience to ProAct's leadership group for more than two years, and serves several ProAct clients as a therapist in Hudson, Wis.